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ABSTRACT

Twenty-four of the 35 Canadian schools with formal journalism programs responded to a survey conducted to collect data about enrollment, curricula, faculty background in journalism, and the ability of journalism graduates to find jobs in the profession. Highlights of the results are as follows: there are an estimated 3,300 journalism students in Canada, with an average program enrollment of 94 students (reporting schools had from 10 to 575 students in their programs); most of the curricula revolve around student internships on campus or local newspapers, with course materials reflecting student/faculty reactions to current events; and a majority (78%) of Canadian journalism graduates in 1976 secured journalism-related jobs. That Canadian journalism schools stress previous journalism experience in their prospective faculty members is indicated by the fact that current faculty members at the responding schools have an average of seven years of journalistic experience. (A list of the responding schools and a copy of the questionnaire are provided.) (RL)

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JOURNALISM EDUCATION IN CANADA

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JOURNALISM EDUCATION IN CANADA

HIGHLIGHTS

The results of our survey indicate that

Journalism education programs are many in number (35) across Canada but small in average enrolment.

Much "course" material in the journalism programs is determined by newspaper internships and student/faculty reactions to external current events.

78% of 1976 Canadian journalism graduates secured journalism-related jobs.

Local professional journalists are used by most schools as curriculum advisors.

Most prospective faculty members in Canadian journalism schools must have previous journalism experience.

66% of current full-time faculty members were full-time journalists within the past five years and 88% were journalists within the past 10 years.

BACKGROUND

Journalism education programs in Canada and the number of students studying journalism have increased dramatically over the past 10 to 15 years. A composite picture of the enrolment at these schools, their curricula, their faculty members and the student employment situation has, however, been lacking. To this end, in the spring of this year CDNPA's Editorial Division and Research Committees approved a joint proposal to study the situation by distributing a comprehensive questionnaire to all community colleges, CEGEPs and universities in Canada with formal journalism programs.

This survey represents the first formal research project of the CDNPA Editorial Division as well as the first formal Canadian survey of its kind known to the authors. It also reflects the increasing attention paid to journalism education by the daily newspaper industry and the growing co-operation between the schools and the CDNPA Editorial Division.

The questionnaire itself was based to a modest extent on a survey done last year by the Journalism Education Committee of the Associated Press Managing Editors Association (APME). It was mailed in June to the heads of the 35 schools in Canada known to have formal journalism programs. 24 replies (69%) were received. The responses are fairly representative of the geographic distribution of journalism programs across the country although Quebec is somewhat under-represented and Ontario is somewhat over-represented. All tabulations are available for inspection from CDNPA.

ENROLMENT

American media analyst and critic, Ben Bagdikian, in his March, 1977 Atlantic Monthly article on journalism education remarks that "more than enough students are enrolled in journalism courses (in the United States) at this moment to replace every professional journalist now employed on an American newspaper." This is, perhaps, a rather misleading comparison as he does not mention that the journalism students include those studying radio, television, public relations and advertising. However, his figures do point out the remarkable growth rate of journalism education in the United States in recent years - from 19,229 in 1965 to 64,151 in 1975, an increase of more than 200%. In Canada the growth rate has also been exceptional as community colleges, universities and CEGEPs have been established throughout the country since the early 1960s.

Using enrolment figures from our own questionnaire we estimate that there are 3,300 journalism students in Canada. (The University of Texas School of Communication, by comparison, alone has more than 3,000 journalism students). The 24 schools which responded to our questionnaire have an average full-time student enrolment of 94 ranging from 10 (Red Deer) to 575 (Carleton). Excluding the two largest schools, Ryerson and Carleton, the average enrolment is 60. 14 of the 24 schools have two-year courses, three have a one-year course (two of the three, Laval and the University of Western Ontario, have post-secondary school education admission requirements), six have three-year programs and one has a four-year program (Carleton).

Roughly half the schools presently have entrance tests and roughly half those without tests are contemplating them in the future. Some schools do not contemplate them because they practise an open-door policy as far as admission is concerned. A common comment on entrance tests was similar to this one: "It has been my experience that the courses themselves quickly weed out those with deficiencies " (Lethbridge). Such comments are borne out in the high failure and drop-out rates reported. The average failure rate for first-year students is 14%, and for second-year students, 13%. The drop-out rates for these years are 20% and 9%.

The schools are very divided on the desirability of a uniform entrance test. Typical reservations are that such a test would be desirable only if it were used in conjunction with other factors also taken into account for admission. Also, there was the belief that such a test would not meet specific local needs. Of those who now have their own entrance tests, grammar, writing skills and spelling are considered on the average the most important skills measured by the test. Typing, interpretation-analytic skills and reading comprehension are considered of less importance in these tests.

About a third of the schools have a beginning course which serves the purpose of identifying weak or poorly-motivated students. One of these schools, Canadore, has both such a course and an entrance test. All schools with such courses have found them to be very useful.

10 of the 21 schools which answered the question have non-journalism majors enrolled in journalism courses. The schools also were asked if the number of non-journalism students had risen or fallen in the past five years. Only three of the 10 said that the number had risen. These were surprising findings considering the comments of Warren Agee of the University of Georgia in his paper presented at the annual convention of the Association for Education in Journalism held in Wisconsin in August of this year. He stated that in the United States colleges and universities have experienced "a substantial increase in the number of non-journalism majors enrolling in journalism courses". He attributed this to, among other things, "the public's new found interest in the mass media" including the Nixon administration's attacks on the media, the Pentagon Papers and the Watergate developments.

Looking at our own figures, the three schools with rising non-journalism enrolment are all universities rather than community colleges or CEGEPs. Perhaps this suggests a reason for the apparent difference between the American and Canadian situations. Many American journalism schools are within liberal arts colleges or universities. Such institutions often allow their students to gain their school credits in a very wide range of courses. Most of Canada's journalism schools, on the other hand, are within applied arts or technological institutes. The students are there to learn specific skills and often are not allowed to take courses in other areas. What the impact might be of such differences in the two countries on future journalism would be merely conjecture.

One other unexpected result was that only about a third of the respondents said their budget and allotment of teachers are tied closely to enrolment numbers. This was unexpected since two-thirds of the responding schools are in the Province of Ontario where provincial monies to a large extent are allocated to learning institutions according to their enrolments.

This result may be more an indication that provincial monies are allocated at the total college or university level but that within the college or university there is considerable flexibility in distribution methods. Although a third of the respondents did say budget and teachers are tied to enrolment numbers, none of the comments received on this question suggested that this was a significant problem. However the APME survey results leave one with the impression that American journalism educators are much more tied to "body counts" than their Canadian counterparts. One-half the schools in the APME study indicated that they had problems in the budget-teacher allotment area and, in addition, the comments quoted in the study from 10 schools suggests that these problems are significant. A typical comment was, "Bodies <u>are</u> important! Full-time equivalent student enrolment must remain high for adequate funding and personnel".

CURRICULUM

Several respondents found it difficult to quantify the amount of time spent in courses in specified subject areas. From those who were able to estimat time allotments within the journalism department, it appears that most classroom time is spent on politics, courts and the law, the social sciences and urban affairs. Little time appears to be spent on consumer affairs, natural science or medicine. Most classroom time outside the journalism department is used studying English and English literature, political science and economics. Typical of the comments on this question was one received from Ryerson: "This is a very difficult question to answer with any precision. None of these subjects is specifically covered in journalism classes yet each of them is covered often during the three years; for instance, if there is an election during term, reporting students will be closely involved, the masthead of the Ryersonian and the broadcast laboratory students (line up editors, reporters) will be planning coverage, assigning articles and pictures. Budget day at Queen's Park will see 20 of our reporters in the public gallery. A coroner's inquest can involve students with the police, courts and medicine. A three-day seminar on campus (as we had last year) of women s groups from across Metro gets students into consumer affairs, urban affairs, perhaps even the arts."

Roughly 40% of the schools which responded to the question on Video Display Terminal training said all their students receive training on VDTs or other electronic equipment. Of those schools

which do not give such training nine said they do not have immediate plans to add such equipment and four said they did. One respondent said, "We do not consider this (VDT training) important at this stage. Our advisors say this can be learned easily on the job". The advisors at another school decided that such training would perhaps never be used because the students would probably have to retrain on the job since the machines and computer systems vary so greatly from one newspaper to another.

Almost three-quarters of the responding schools require internships on their own newspapers and almost three-quarters require internships on newspapers other than their own school papers. Editing work on a newspaper also is a requirement in two-thirds of the schools and almost all schools give a basic course in copy editing and more than a third give an advanced course. These courses always cover both headline writing and layout.

There was general agreement among the schools that no more curriculum time should be spent on the theoretical aspects of journalism. Three respondents did add that if more time were available(for example, if another year of study was added to their programs) they would like to spend more time teaching theory.

A wide variety of courses has been introduced at the schools during the past three years. Economics, history, editing, photography and shorthand courses all were mentioned three times or more as new courses. (Warren Agee reported similar findings in the United States when he surveyed American journalism educators, although his survey was limited to changes in the news editorial field.)

Some of the other courses mentioned were consumer affairs, newspaper management, geography, layout, law, public relations, sports seminar (optional), freelance writing and human relations. A wide variety of courses also has been dropped during the past three years. Social science, public relations and English (including Basics of Reporting, Creative Writing-non-fiction and English Literature) all were mentioned at least twice. Other courses which have been dropped include pasteup, philosophy and newsroom management.

22 of the 24 schools stated that full-time professional journalists play a part in analyzing the school curriculum and making suggestions on courses. From the voluntary comments we received with our responses, it is our belief that journalism educators in Canada enjoy and feel they benefit from the close relationship they have with the local media. Ben Bagdikian in his Atlantic Monthly article mentions similar findings to which he adds a strong cautionary note, and we quote: "A number of schools proudly announce that their courses in journalism have been designed with the help of local publishers and broadcasters, entrepreneurs whose daily products in some instances are spectacular examples of rotten journalism." We should also not accept the qualifications of the school advisors without question but remember that our responses are from journalism educators alone. Whether the media feel they also benefit through this association could perhaps be determined through future study.

FACULTY

The schools which responded to our questionnaire have an average of 3.6 full-time faculty members and 4.9 part-time faculty members.

Bagdikian in his Atlantic Monthly article paints quite a different picture of the background of American faculty members than we found in our survey. He states: "In almost half the junior colleges teaching journalism, the faculty has no professional experience; in 28%, the faculty has had neither media experience nor college courses in the subject."

Our findings were that 66% of all full-time faculty members in Canada had been full-time journalists within the past five years and 88% had been journalists within the past 10 years. Of the 21 schools who answered this question, 14 stated that prospective faculty members must have previous journalism experience. Seven years was the average number of years' experience required. We also found that most schools have had little difficulty with their school officials regarding the hiring of "experience-rich, degree-poor" instructors. Part of the reason for our high percentages of ex-journalists on faculty staff may be due to the young age of most journalism schools in Canada. These percentages may decline in the future as the schools grow older.

Once hired, there was very divided opinion on the question of whether journalism professionals-turned-faculty members were being promoted as often as professors with more advanced degrees but less newsroom experience. Of the 17 who responded to this question, 12 felt very strongly that there was no discrimination in promoting practises and four felt very strongly that there was. Most schools have practising journalists in part-time teaching roles and although we did not ask this question specifically, four schools mentioned that they often have practising journalists visit their schools as guest lecturers. On our last question dealing with faculty, we found that they do not often teach or make classroom appearances outside their own departments.

EMPLOYMENT

15 of the 24 departments or schools of journalism have formalized student placement services and 11 invited media reps to their campuses last year to recruit students. Despite this help only 18% of first-year students secured journalism-related summer jobs in 1977; however, this jumped to 34% for second year students.

As to the future for graduating students in the United States, Bagdikian states: "An appalling percentage of journalism graduates face guaranteed unemployment in their chosen field". This statement does not seem to be applicable to Canadian graduates at the present time. According to our survey 78%* of the 1976 graduating class of our respondents secured journalism-related jobs after graduation. Also the comments we received on this question were very positive. Two examples are: "(Even) some of the non-graduates took journalism jobs and we had jobs left over" (Lethbridge) and "most graduates who actively seek newspaper work are placed soon after graduation" (Loyalist). Considering that some of the 22% of the students who did not obtain journalism-related jobs dropped out of the journalism job market voluntarily for one reason or other (for example, to go back to school), the job placement picture seems relatively healthy at the moment, although we do not know how our figures compare to the job rates of graduates in other subject areas. An item which remains for future study is to ascertain the numbers of graduates who secured jobs in each of the various media, in advertising, in public relations and other journalism-related fields.

*The percent of students obtaining journalism-related jobs from each individual school was weighted by the average year class size in each school, not taking into account varying drop-out and failure rates.

CONCLUSION

Our survey indicates that there are many journalism education programs in Canada (35) and they have, excluding the two largest schools, an average enrolment of 60. Course content is flexible, local media people are used as curriculum advisors, 78% of graduates in 1976 secured journalism-related jobs and most faculty members are former full-time professional journalists.

Two cautionary notes on our data should be mentioned. First, our general impressions are partially a result of comparative data from the U.S. and we did not attempt to answer the question as to whether we should use the U.S. as our benchmark in the first place. Secondly, our data comes from faculty members rather than from students or the newspaper editors and others who hire or do not hire the students. As a result of this second point we would like to suggest a next step - a questionnaire paralleling our present one where possible, to be sent to newspaper editors. Results from such a questionnaire would, hopefully, tell us how well the qualifications of the journalism graduates mesh with the needs of the industry.

Pending the results of such a second phase of research, the existing close liaison between schools and their local newspapers as well as the favorable job placement rate suggests to us that journalism schools in Canada generally are progressive, active and fruitful training grounds for future journalists.

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Jones, Jenk, Associated Press Managing Editors Education Committee Reports (No. 1 and 2) on Journalism Education, 1977.

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Carleton University
Ottawa, Ontario

Centennial College of Applied Arts
Toronto, Ontario

Conestoga College
Kitchener, Ontario

Douglas College
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New Westminster, B.C.

Durham College of Applied Arts
Oshawa, Ontario

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Humber College of Applied Arts
Humber College Boulevard
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Toronto, Ontario

Lambton College
Sarnia, Ontario

Lethbridge Community College
Lethbridge, Alberta

Loyalist College of Applied Arts
Belleville, Ontario

Universite Laval
Ste-Foy, Quebec

Niagara College of Applied Arts
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Red Deer College
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Ryerson Polytechnical Institute
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St. Clair College
Windsor, Ontario

Sheridan College of Applied Arts
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Vancouver City College
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100 West 49th Avenue
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University of Western Ontario
London, Ontario

CANADIAN DAILY NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Journalism Education Questionnaire

NAME OF COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY _____

NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN YOUR SCHOOL OR DEPARTMENT/J-PROGRAM Full Time _____ Part Time _____

NUMBER OF FACULTY (INCLUDING DIRECTOR) IN YOUR SCHOOL OR DEPARTMENT Full Time _____ Part Time _____

Note: For those questions indicating a response on a 7 point scale, circle the number on the scale which most closely approximates the strength of your agreement or disagreement with the statement.

1. a) Does your school give any type of entrance test which students must pass in order to enter J-school? yes ☐ no ☐

b) If no to above question do you contemplate such testing in the future? yes ☐ no ☐

c) If you do give an entrance test, what importance does it give to the following skills?

	very important						not important
spelling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
grammar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
typing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
interpretation-analytical skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
writing skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
broad general knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
other specific skill (specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

2. How do you rate the importance of these journalistic skills?

	very important						not important
spelling	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
curiosity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
grammar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
typing	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
interpretation-analytical skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
writing skill	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
broad general knowledge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
other specific skill (specify)_____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

3. A uniform entrance test should be developed to help all schools screen the qualifications of potential J-students.

very desirable						least desirable
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

4. a) Does your journalism school have a beginning course to discover weaker or less motivated students? yes ☐ no ☐

b) If yes to above question what does it stress? _____

c) If yes to question 4a what results have you had from it?

very useful						of little use
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

d) What is the failure rate among your students in the first year _____%

second year _____%

third year _____%(if applicable)

fourth year _____%(if applicable)

e) What percentage of your students voluntarily drop out of the journalism program in the

first year _____

second year _____

third year _____ (if applicable)

fourth year _____ (if applicable)

5. a) Are your budget and allotment of teachers tied closely to a body count of students?

yes ☐ no ☐

b) What kinds of problems, if any, have you had from your university administration if you made any attempt to decrease the number of journalism students?

_____

_____

c) What kinds of problems, if any, have you had from your university administration if you made any attempt to increase the number of journalism students?

_____

_____

What percentage of time in reporting courses and non-reporting courses within the journalism department is devoted to the following subject areas? (C = compulsory, PME = possible maximum elective)

	First Year		Second Year		Third Year (where applicable)		Fourth Year (where applicable)	
	C	PME	C	PME	C	PME	C	PME
politics	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
medicine	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
economics & business	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
natural science	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
social science	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
the arts	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
sports	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
urban affairs	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
consumer affairs	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
police	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
courts and the law	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%
other (specify)_____	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%	___%

7. How many class hours outside the journalism department are devoted to the following subject areas: (Use hours per semester as your base. For example, if a course is 2 or 3 semesters long, multiply number of hours per semester by 2 or 3.

Number of hours from enrolment to graduation

	compulsory	possible maximum electives
political science	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.
history	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.
economics	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.
English and English literature	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.
sociology	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.
business	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.
science	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.
other (specify) _____	_____ hrs.	_____ hrs.

8. What percentage of your print journalism students receives training on VDTs or other electronic equipment, either in class or on a student paper? _____%

9. If none receives such training, do you have immediate plans for such equipment?

yes ☐ no ☐

10. In order to graduate do you require your students to have internships on your own college or university newspaper?

yes ☐ no ☐

11. In order to graduate do you require your students to have internships on a newspaper other than your college or university paper?

yes ☐ no ☐

12. What courses in copy editing do you have?

basic course ☐

advanced course ☐

no course ☐

13. What areas in copy editing do you cover? (within or ourside copy editing courses)

headline writing ☐

layout ☐

other (specify) _____ ☐

14. Do you require editing work on a school paper or another newspaper? yes ☐ no ☐

15. What new courses have been introduced to your journalism school in the past 3 years? (specify)

_____

16. What courses have been eliminated in the past 3 years? (specify) _____

_____

17. Do full time professional journalists through visiting committees or other arrangements, analyze your curriculum and make suggestions on courses? yes ☐ no ☐

18. More curriculum time ought to be spent on the theoretical aspects of journalism.

strongly agree strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

19. How many practising journalists did you have on your campus in part time teaching roles in the 1976-1977 academic year?

_____

20. If you had added journalism professionals to your full time staff during the past 3 years, these people are being promoted less often than professors who have more advanced degrees but less newsroom experience.

strongly agree strongly disagree

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

21. a) What percentage of your present full time faculty were full time professional journalists?

within the past 5 years ____%
within the past 10 years ____%
longer ago than 10 years ____%

b) To become a faculty member at your school, must a candidate have a minimum number of years of journalism experience?
yes ☐ no ☐

c) If yes to (b), how many years are required? ____ years

22. Have you had difficulty with those university officials the J-school must report to, regarding the hiring of experience-rich degree-poor instructors?

much difficulty little difficulty

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

23. a) How many full time students who were not journalism majors were enrolled in one or more journalism courses in the 1976-1977 academic year? _____

b) Has this number been rising or falling proportionate to full time journalism enrolment in the last 5 years? (check one)

rising _____ falling _____ no change _____

24. Do your journalism school faculty members teach any courses or make classroom appearances in other departments, such as law or business, to promote an understanding among those students of the place of journalism in society?

often rarely

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

25. a) Does your department have a formalized service for helping to place students in journalism-related jobs during the summer and upon graduation?

yes ☐ no ☐

b) Did you in the 1976-1977 academic year invite media representatives to your campus to recruit journalism students?

yes ☐ no ☐

c) What percentage of your students (other than those graduating) secured employment in journalism related jobs for the summer of 1977?

First year students ____%
Second year students ____%
Third year students (if not graduates) ____%

d) What percentage of your 1976 graduating class secured employment in journalism related jobs? _____%

DATE COMPLETED _____

YOUR NAME _____

POSITION _____

(Along with your questionnaire, would you please send us a copy of your department's/school's student calendar or syllabus for our files.)

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